

IMPACTS OF LANDSCAPING ON NATURAL AREAS

The vegetation surrounding wildlands can have both direct and indirect impacts on the plants and animals that live within our parks and natural areas. Is your garden harming your neighborhood park or wildland? Negative impacts of inappropriate landscaping next to wildlands include: introduction of invasive species into parks, increased erosion into local streams, reduced water quality from fertilizer and pesticide run-off, and reductions in wildlife.

Inappropriate landscaping next to parklands can:

- Add unwanted excess water to local streams
- Cause non-native plant species invasion into parklands resulting in:
 - Exclusion of native plants
 - Reduced habitat quality
 - Loss of wildlife
- Increase erosion and sediment inputs into local streams
- Create habitat for invasive species in fire clearance zones causing weed invasion into wildlands
- Harm native plants and animals due to improper use of rodenticides, herbicides, and fertilizers

Six simple things you can do to make your yard or garden wildland friendly:

- 1) **Don't plant a pest.** Don't plant any garden plants that invade wildlands. See www.cal-ipc.org for a list of non-native plants that invade wildlands and for suggested alternatives.
- 2) **Reduce water use.** Use drought-tolerant plants and don't over-irrigate. Make sure that water is not running off your property and into local waterways.
- 3) **Whenever possible, plant native plants.** These species make excellent wildlife habitat, are adapted to our local climate, require little water and pose no ecological threat to neighboring wildlands.
- 4) **Prevent weed spread from fire clearance areas.** Keep your fire clearance zone from spreading weed seeds into adjacent wildlands. This means clearing the area before plants set seed. In wet years this may mean clearing your fuel modification zone several times during the spring and summer to prevent fuel build-up.
- 5) **Keep an eye on your garden plants.** New invasive species are born every day. Walk the wildlands bordering your property frequently and look for garden escapes. If you see plants moving out into parklands, replace these plants in your garden with a less aggressive species.
- 6) **Reduce chemical use and use all chemicals properly.** Improperly used pesticides and fertilizers can move into wildlands impacting native plants and animals.